UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/820
31 August 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 30 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Acting upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a letter dated 30 August 1998 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, which refers to certain grave facts that have recently been revealed concerning the control which the United States has over the Special Commission established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), including its schedule and methods of work. In that same letter, the Deputy Prime Minister urges the Security Council to conduct a serious investigation into the above-mentioned facts, to remedy the situation prevailing within the Special Commission so as to turn the latter into an impartial international body, in accordance with the requests formulated by Iraq in a communiqué issued by its leaders, on 5 August 1998 and, finally, to put an end to the suffering resulting from the embargo imposed on our country.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 30 August 1998 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

The resignation of Mr. Scott Ritter and the information published in the media have confirmed serious facts to which Iraq had drawn attention, both in official letters to the Security Council and in its statements, as well as during consultations it held with members of the Council. These facts are as follows:

1. The Special Commission established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) is controlled by the United States, which acts in coordination and in collaboration with the United Kingdom. In fact, it is they who decide on the Commission's agenda and on its working methods. Information recently published concerning the ties of coordination that had developed between the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Richard Butler, and the United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the existence of which Mrs. Albright herself acknowledged in an interview published in The New York Times on 17 August 1998, and the fact that Mr. Butler and certain members of the Special Commission act in coordination with United States information services and certain services of the State Department, constitute flagrant proof of the collusion which Iraq uncovered long ago and concerning which it has issued repeated warnings asking both you and the Security Council to correct the situation and thus remove the Special Commission from the control of the United States and turn it into an impartial and fair international body. It is to be regretted that these requests which Iraq has been making for years have not been received with the necessary understanding and support within the Security Council. The attempts made in recent months to appoint two people, chosen from among nationals of the countries which are permanent members of the Security Council, as advisers to the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission have made it impossible to achieve a real balance in the composition of the Special Commission.

2. Mr. Ritter's claims that the United States pressured the Special Commission to reduce its intrusive inspections is a travesty of the facts. However, these statements together with certain articles published in the American press demonstrate very clearly that it is the United States which, together with the Special Commission, has determined the timing of certain inspections so as to be able to carry out its plans and its military and diplomatic preparations, thereby putting the Council responsible for the issue in a completely ridiculous position.

By way of correction and in order to give you and the Security Council a clear picture of the number of inspections carried out during the period following the crisis of November 1997 and 20 July 1998, I should point out that the number of inspections came to 446 and that the list of the activities carried out by the Commission is as follows:

192 inspections in the area of missiles

28 inspections in the area of chemical weapons

192 inspections in the area of biological weapons

16 inspections focusing on imports and exports and

17 inspections carried out in the context of the Special Group.

3. The language used by Mr. Scott Ritter in his letter of resignation and the statements he made all provide indisputable confirmation that the claims that the Special Commission is a body under the authority of the Security Council are completely false. If they were true, how could an inspector who has worked in the Special Commission since 1981 and has held senior positions therein have been so presumptuous as to attack the higher body to which he was answerable and thereby attack the Secretary-General of the United Nations? How could he, an officer who is perfectly well aware of the rules of discipline, have acted thus?

The explanation for such behaviour is clear. In fact the group which has controlled the Special Commission for years was on the point of being uncovered. It is at that point that Scott Ritter launched his attacks in order the better to counter the attempts to uncover the lies proffered by the Special Commission regarding the disarmament issues and the measures taken by Iraq. It will be noted in this connection that far from reprimanding Scott Ritter for the way he spoke about the Security Council, the Executive Chairman on the contrary congratulated him. As for the fallacious nature of the accusations made by Scott Ritter regarding the so-called concealment of weapons in Iraq, we wish to point out that between 1991 and the date of the most recent inspection, which he himself headed in 1998, he participated in 28 inspection teams, headed 13 of them and carried out a total of 475 inspections. Furthermore, we challenge him and the Special Commission, to show the slightest evidence to substantiate the truth of his claims regarding the concealment of buried weapons, the composition of such weapons and related documents. It will be recalled, in this connection, that the sites which he inspected included premises belonging to the Republican Guard, the Special Guard, the special security services, information services and the Ministry of Defence as well as other sensitive sites.

4. Mr. Scott Ritter's letter raises questions about the methodology followed by the Special Commission, since it indicates that the latter "has good reason to believe that there are significant numbers of proscribed weapons and related components ... unaccounted for in Iraq today". Mr. Ritter accuses the Security Council of propagating an illusion both in relation to the work of the Special Commission and in attempting to deal specifically with the work completed by the Commission over the past seven years, yet he takes the liberty of considering that "reason to believe that there are ... proscribed weapons" constitutes a basis for the Commission's activities and inspection methodology.

It goes without saying that Mr. Scott Ritter is basing himself here not on concrete evidence or facts, but on false hypotheses.

5. Mr. Ritter's letter contains a typical attack against Iraq that takes no account of the rules applicable to officials of international organizations, which do not allow them to make statements against a Member State or to make public statements concerning their mission. In this connection, we wish to point out that Mr. Ritter's position does not represent a unique case, but has a number of precedents: other experts, in the past, have made statements about their activities within the Special Commission, and no measures have been taken against them. This was the case, for example, of the American David Kay and the Englishman Terence Taylor, and even of the Vice-Chairman of the Special Commission, Mr. Duelfer, who appeared on the programme "Impact" broadcast by CNN on 2 March 1998, along with a group of experts from the Commission, in order to raise fears about the alleged capacities of Iraq's biological programme at the time of the presidential sites crisis, which was wholly fabricated by the Special Commission.

6. The coordination between the Special Commission and Israel, which was revealed only recently, had already been highlighted many times by Iraq. We wish to ask you and the Council how you could have allowed an organ under the Security Council's authority to examine issues concerning Iraq in coordination with one of the parties, in this case Israel. In addition, the Council is supposed to ensure the implementation of paragraph 14 of its resolution 687 (1991), adopted under Chapter VII, as well as of paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 of that resolution. According to this paragraph, Israel's weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated, since the entire Middle East is to be made a zone free from such weapons. How, then, can you and the Council agree to allow an organ under the Council's authority and operating on behalf of the United Nations to act in coordination with Israel against Iraq, while doing nothing to ensure the implementation of paragraph 14 of the Council's resolution?

Iraq requests the Security Council to open a serious investigation of all these facts and to correct the situation within the Special Commission so that it may become an impartial international body and not an information service for a particular State, as it requested previously in the statement published by the Iraqi Presidency on 5 August 1998.

We have always contended that, were the Special Commission a neutral and impartial international body, it would have informed the Security Council long ago that its task under resolution 687 (1991), section C, as well as the mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency, had been completed. That would have enabled the Council to end the injustice being perpetrated against Iraq and to implement paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991), in the interest of justice and equity. However, this has not happened because the Commission responsible for the technical implementation of the resolution is neither neutral nor impartial, and because the United States of America exercises arbitrary power within the Council and is preventing it from recognizing the facts.

The Security Council is requested to put a stop to this farce being staged under cover of the United Nations and the Security Council and to end the tragedy caused by the embargo imposed on Iraq.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister